

S Y S T E M S O F C A R E EVALUATION UPDATE

UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL EVALUATION

Welcome to the First Issue of *Evaluation Update*!

September 1, 2006

We're pleased to launch our new *Evaluation Update*, designed to inform you about new and continuing activities and developments within the national evaluation of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program. The national evaluation is an essential support to the success of communities participating within systems of care (SOC) and an invaluable resource to the communities' sustainability efforts during and beyond the cooperative agreement period.

With 54 active sites currently involved in the national evaluation, it is a huge enterprise with numerous ongoing and complex activities. The *Evaluation Update* will help keep SOC sites up-to-date about national evaluation issues and activities. Our goal is to make the evaluation more meaningful to all by presenting short pieces on relevant topics, informing users about upcoming activities, and encouraging grantees to share evaluation tips so communities can jointly navigate the "evaluation maze."



This issue introduces you to members of the Child, Adolescent & Family Branch (CAFB) and the National Evaluation Team. This brings home the importance of the relationship of local and national evaluation activities to all program activities associated with SOC. We know that you share the belief that all of us who dedicate our efforts to the SOC evaluation have a common goal: *healthy and happy children*. We hope that *Evaluation Update* brings that message home every month.

Meet the Child, Adolescent and Family Branch (CAFB)

The success of the national evaluation rides upon the efforts of many, many people, including staff at SAMHSA, the National Evaluation Team, and the extended network of program partners who provide technical assistance to the grantees.

Leading the effort to transform our nation's mental health care system into one that is recovery-oriented and consumer-centered is the Director of SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services, Kathryn Power, who has a

distinguished career in management and provision of mental health services.

She is supported in this activity by the CAFB and Dr. Gary Blau, Branch Chief, and Diane Sondheimer, Deputy Branch Chief, in the Branch's efforts to improve the lives of children and families. More information about the CAFB can be found at www.systemsofcare.samhsa.gov/ Dr. Sylvia Fisher is the CAFB Evaluation Program Director and Project Officer for the national evaluation, and oversees national evaluation activities.

CAFB Site Cooperative Agreement Project Officers, who serve as the point of contact between SAMHSA and the SOC grantees, include Michele Herman, Andy Hunt, Lisa Rubenstein, Hardy Stone, Susan Stromberg, and Elizabeth Sweet. They work with grantees to monitor their progress and provide assistance and guidance to ensure that grantees meet cooperative agreement requirements. They also ensure that grantees meet the goals of their cooperative agreements and participate in making decisions to help achieve program objectives. Lisa Adams, Grants Program Assistant and Susan O'Rear, Support Staff member ably round out the CAFB team.

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Questions or Comments? Email acain@wrma.com

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Upcoming Evaluation Activities

- Family Training for the national evaluation technical assistance (TA) site visits Rockville, MD September 5-6
- The national evaluation workshops in Region I & II TAP meeting Buffalo, NY September 12-14
- Training & TA site visits, August-October



TIP OF THE MONTH!

Starting in the next issue of *Evaluation Update*, this space will provide grantee communities an opportunity to share helpful guidance, lessons learned, and tips related to a particular evaluation topic.

Meet the National Evaluation...

Beginning September 15, 2005, SAMHSA contracted with Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc. (WRMA) and ORC Macro to conduct the national evaluation of the 2005-funded (Phase V) system of care (SOC) grantees. ORC Macro has been the national evaluator since the SOC program's inception in 1993 (Phases I-IV of grantee funding).

Dr. John Fluke (WRMA Principal

Investigator), Dr. Brigitte Manteuffel (ORC Macro Principal Investigator/Project Director), and Dr. Carolyn Lichtenstein (WRMA Project Director), head up the evaluation of Phase V grantees. Dr. Manteuffel leads the evaluation of Phase IV grantees. In addition, project managers with specialized content expertise are important to the national evaluation leadership.

Although the national evaluation

managers are a friendly and accessible bunch, the national evaluation site liaisons are the communities' primary resource for all questions related to the national evaluation. They have access to the experts responsible for all facets of the national evaluation, including all core and special studies conducted by the National Evaluation Team.

...Team!

The National Evaluation Team would not be complete without some very important organizations. The Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH) (<http://www.ffcmh.org/>) works in partnership with the National Evaluation Team to ensure that families and youth are engaged in every aspect of the local and national evalua-

tions. FFCMH staff are working with National Evaluation Team staff to develop the on-site evaluation training curriculum. FFCMH also provides ongoing support for family members involved in grantees' local evaluations and various training opportunities through multiple venues. The Research and Training Center for Children's Mental

Health at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (<http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/>) provides evaluation technical assistance and consultation – helping grantees develop and refine their logic models and providing guidance on use of the System of Care Practice Review.

All About Site Visits

Here is a quick overview of the various site visits the communities will complete:

1. **Community Technical Assistance (TA) Site Visit**—This 2 ½-day site visit is coordinated by your Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator (RTAC) and the local project team to provide start-up TA in the early part of Year 1. These site visits are known as Start Up visits. Your national evaluation liaison or other national evaluation staff may be, or have been, involved by conference call.
2. **Federal Site Visits**—These formal site visits will be conducted during Years 2 and 4 of the cooperative agreements. During the visit, a grantee's project officer monitors the site's progress, and provides assistance and guidance to ensure that the grantee meets requirements of the cooperative agreement. The national evaluation does not attend federal site visits.
3. **Evaluation Training & TA Site Visits**—This site visit from the National Evaluation Team will occur in late summer/early fall of 2006 for 2005-funded grantees. This 2-day visit is coordinated by each grantee's national evaluation site liaison and its local evaluation team. Training and TA is provided about the national evaluation and specific needs of the local evaluation team. These training site visits only occur once, unless an additional visit is needed at a later point.
4. **System of Care Assessment Site Visits**—This 3-day site visit occurs 3 times during the cooperative agreement period: 5-6 months into Year 2 and every 18-24 months thereafter. The visit involves semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders to (1) assess whether programs have been implemented according to system of care principles, and (2) understand how sites change over time.

Future Evaluation Update Topics

- Technical assistance
- Family involvement
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Cultural and linguistic competence
- Evaluation and sustainability
- Local SOC team communication strategies

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